

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 00746 142252Z

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2951

INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL QUEBEC CITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 0746

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, CA

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - RECOGNITION SOUGHT FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE
IN QUEBEC AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

1. MONTREAL GAZETTE MARCH 14 PUBLISHED CANADIAN PRESS REPORT FROM QUEBEC CITY ANNOUNCING RECENT FORMATION QUEBEC ASSOCIATION OF AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS (QAATC), CLAIMING TO REPRESENT 250 OF QUEBEC'S 350 CONTROLLERS. QAATC SEEKING ELIMINATION OF ENGLISH ONLY REQUIREMENT WHICH PERMITS USE OF FRENCH SOLELY IN EMERGENCY OR OTHER SPECIAL SITUATIONS. CLAIMS GOC REGULATIONS RE AVIATION LANGUAGE NOW TWELVE YEARS OLD AND INCONSISTENT WITH GOC OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT AND ICAO REGULATIONS.

2. OFFICIAL OF CANADIAN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS ASSOCIATION (CATCA) HAS CONFIRMED TO TCO ACCURACY THIS REPORT BUT INDICATED NOT CERTAIN AS TO NUMBER QUEBEC CONTROLLERS INVOLVED. FELT FIGURE MIGHT BE CLOSER TO FIFTY AND CONCENTRATED IN QUEBEC CITY AND SEPT ILES. MOT HAS BEEN UNDER PRESSURE FROM QUEBEC INTERESTS OVER PAST TWO YEARS ACCORD FRENCH EQUAL STATUS WITH ENGLISH, SOURCE ADVISED, AND HAS BEEN UNWILLING REJECT PRESSURE BY AFFIRMING EXISTING
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 00746 142252Z

REGULATIONS. CATCA CONSIDERS QAATC DEMAND DANGEROUS

FROM AVIATION SAFETY VIEWPOINT AS IT WOULD BE FIRST
STEP TO EVENTUAL FRENCH ONLY POLICY. HE SUGGESTED
IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF USG MIGHT STATE THIS TO GOC
WITHIN CONTEXT BROADER CONSIDERATION OF NORTH
AMERICAN AVIATION.

COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THIS ISSUE INVOLVES SUCH
PERPETUALLY THORNY DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY THAT WE SHOULD AVOID
OFFICIAL COMMENT AND TRUST MOT AND CATCA TO HOLD THE LINE.
PORTER

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